BLUE HILLS

EDNA DAVIS ROMIG

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BLUE HILLS

Edna Davis Romig

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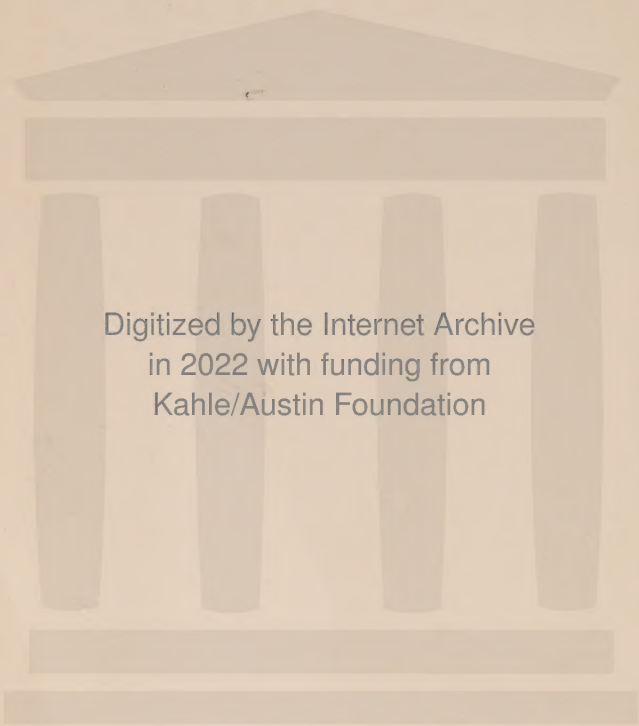
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BLUE HILLS

By

Edna Davis Romig

Author of "LINCOLN REMEMBERS"

PHILADELPHIA

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To William

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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THE SUMMIT

Stand silent now. The summit is attained.
No cloud has come so high, no wind, no bird.
The flashing peak remote at last is gained
And for the moment let there be no word.

The lower mountains flow as flowing seas,
Their crests like breaking crests of the gleaming tide
Curve in the light. What seas so bright as these
That swerve and slant in luminous waves? And wide

The shores of silence glimmer and the far
Faint flowering of color leaves the breath
Broken in mute wonder that there are
Moments like this . . . and yet cold fear . . . and death. . . .

Now cleansed of little passions, purged of fear,
Feel the full power of mountain mood consummate—
On shining height, on far high peak austere,
Know only silence on this flashing summit.

IF I SHOULD BRING A GIFT

If I should bring to you a fitting gift,
It would be a gallant little craft with sails uplift,
A swift white ship upon a roughened sea:
For sailing ships are touched with poetry.
It would have carried on some other day
The gay and fragrant goods of far Cathay,
And still have stored in its mysterious hold
Cargoes whose tale ancient Cipango told.
Its anchors would have caught strange coral knolls
And tangled seaweed near palm-fringed atolls.
It would have ridden against a northern wind—
Staggering, a spent thing, buffeted and blind;
Yet in some tranquil sea again would lie,
Tall rigging etched against some tropic sky.
It would put in at quiet harbor ways
And take new cargoes from the willow-wooded bays,
And then as swift as swallow ever flew
Again it courses on the ocean's blue,
The wind in buoyant sails, a grace of spars,
Sunshine by day, by night the shine of stars,
Valiant in the sea-troughs, or gracefully riding high,
A poignant beauty, the spirit's aching cry—
A swift white ship upon a roughened sea:
For sailing ships are touched with poetry.

YOUNG POET

In spirit he is one to move
Among the quiet things of life, the gracious
sounds;
His sport to net the butterflies of thought,
To hold in leash fancy's swift silver hounds.

His heart is hurt by beauty,
Embittered by blind justice in a shroud.
Life crucifies him: his Golgotha is
The clangor of the crowd.

CARILLONS

I'll build a tower
Of song on song
For that hour
Long and long—
Hour of grief
And despair
And the hour
By joy made fair;
I'll build a white tower
And a golden stair.
And in the tower
Clear bells will sing
Notes like a flower
Carillons ring.

MORAVIAN TROMBONES

The stars still show
Though the moon is gone;
The night hours go
Toward the Easter dawn.

The little town sleeps in its tranquil rest;
Of a sudden there lifts a rustling breeze,
The birds of the dawning stir in their nest
And a new life moves through the slumbering trees.
The clock in the ivy-grown tower has struck
Half-past two of an April morn,
And then as an unseen hand might pluck
A resonant string, there sounds a horn—
The high sweet notes, long drawn and clear,
And the little town wakes once more to hear
On the street corner now, then all around
The Moravian trombones of Easter sound.
For once a year on the holy night
When the Lord Christ lay in the silent tomb,
The young Moravian men will make
The old wind instruments once more wake
To life out of the old year's womb
Of silence and dark; to bring to light
The Moravian trombones once a year
That again the sleeping town may hear
Old Herrenhut hymns that John Huss sang
In the old, old town where the Easter bells rang
Many and many a year ago.

Then the town will wake, for the people know
The trombones call them all to go
To the burial ground, God's acre broad
Where the tombstones lie all flat and low—
For equal are we in death and God.

The stars still show
Though the moon is gone;
The night hours go
Toward the Easter dawn.

A silence lies in this quiet place,
The low white stones and the cedars old
From shrub and vine take a solemn grace.
But a stir is felt. A shaft of gold
Falls a-slant green mounds. And full and strong
The choir now sings its Halleluiah song:
"He is risen, He is risen, He is risen as he said;
Christ is risen, Christ is risen, Christ is risen from the dead!"
There is triumph in the sunrise,
There is hope for them that fear;
For Life knows its resurrection
Through Christ's final sacrifice.
And the trombones bring at Easter
All that mystic glory near.

BLUE HILLS

The days seem futile with the rush and fret.
The wheels of life, inexorable, move fast;
The dial flashes speed; the din is wild; but yet
You dare not sicken in the surge. At last
Be master of yourself, arise and seek
The springs of health: the lifted lands are green,
The hills are blue; snow gleams on highest peak;
Cold mountain lakes are placid and serene.
Through pungent avenues of fir and pine
Shy woodland creatures dart in timid rush.
The sun is elixir and warm rich wine.
Silence like music fills the solemn hush;
At night the stars burn near. And by a star
Man long has steered his stormy course. Today
We need wider horizons, from afar
To lift our eyes unto the hills and pray.

THE HOUR

The stars and trees are beautiful tonight—
The tracery of trees against the sky,
Each leafless branch a-fruit with lyric light.
Peace cannot be far off; she seems to sigh
Here in the pulsing dark. A magic power
Escapes the night wind's swift uplifting rush
Now and again. This is the wordless hour
Beneficent. An almost holy hush

Slips in between the twilight and the dawn:
The twilight and the dawn, that cloistered rest
Replete with potence of a world in pawn,
And spirits free to range in wingèd quest.
Night has a mystic power wherewith to give—
Grants even grief to be a fugitive.

IN THE GARDEN

The king had proudly walked within my garden
And there were purple paths for him to go,
And golden bells, and silver trumpets blowing,
And many flaming tapers, row on row. . . .
When he went, I sang away my terror
Of loneliness; I sang away the pain.
I toiled to keep the garden's old familiar beauty
Against the time when he should come again.
How could I, as with eagerness and laughter,
Flinging the gate wide open for my king,
Know that a beggar entered who would ravish
My proudest and my rarest blossoming?
Yet it is not a sob for that lost beauty
That breaks my breath: it is the shame to know
That afterward a beggar stumbled dully
Along the path a king was wont to go.

HIGH HEART

High heart, high heart, I triumph in your laughter—
No spirit prouder and none one-half so gay.
I pause to mark your swift and fine adventure—
No hero rides more gallantly away.
High heart, high heart, you will keep your secret,
No craven words of yours will ever tell:
They needed not a bludgeon for your breaking;
A finer blow had answered just as well.

THE GOLDEN STALLION

The golden stallion riding into the gold South-west,
Riding from radiant dawn down to the splendor of sunset,
Riding the endless sands, swift mounting the purple crest,
Coursing the labyrinth canyons, carved with tower and minaret;
Over the Staked Plains riding, grazed by the buffalo,
Threading the silver rivers, fording broad rivers slow—

Strong as the strong wind riding, nor stop, nor
halt, nor rest,
The golden stallion riding into the gold South-
west. . . . .

The golden stallion riding into the gold South-
west—
Winds from the white range blowing, winds
from the desert blow,
Writing the story of ages on Nature's old
palimpsest—
Riding past half-hidden village, cliff-house,
pueblo,
Fleet as the flower of the cereus, past lizard and
horned toad asleep,
Past castus and yucca and mesquite, the hoofs
of the stallion beat,
On, on, through the dawn to the day's end—on,
on to the mystic quest,
The golden stallion riding into the gold South-
west. . . .

The golden stallion riding into the gold South-
west—
Land of Coronado,
Ancient Colorado;
Legends of El Dorado
Revealed a fabulous treasure no romance ever
guessed,
Told once by Castenada,
Outdid Scheherazada;

Tales told in old Verona
Were new when Arizona
Lay in ruins of Aztec culture;
Not even the crow or vulture
Soared over her ancient stones.
For into the mist of a dim long past
All traces have gone of records and bones,
The walls that they built are all that last
And the people they were with their secrets rest. . . .

The golden stallion riding into the gold Southwest,
Riding to Cibola's cities—the world's wealth all compressed
In Cibola's seven cities of gold and precious gems;
To mesas wearing cities like royal diadems;
To the Spanish missions lying silently in the sun;
To the cross on some *Morado* where the Penitentes run;
To the old, old Indian chieftains, Apache and Navajo,
To the weavers, the metal workers, the potters of long ago. . . .
Riding from golden dawn to night skies velvet soft,
Arching the endless desert, setting great stars aloft,

To the land of purple hills, rose turquoise, amethyst,
Grey-bitter with alkali, tonic with ozone blue,
Land both of healing winds and beauty Judas-kissed,
Land older than man is old, new as life is new. . . .
Riding from out the ages, nor stop, nor halt, nor rest—
Time is a stallion riding into the gold Southwest.

MESA AND FOOTHILL

Wide pastures and far meadows,
And rolling fields of wheat
And endless ranks of sword-leaved corn
Where furrows—like a village street—
Run always up and down;
Or shifting dunes, grey and forlorn,
Or little hills with sunlight crown
I have forgot;
And even the immensities
Of the seven seas—
And who has not
Who looks upon these Western hills
And mesas cut symmetrically
Or blocked like pyramids against the plain?

For washing evermore the ghostly shore
Where fathomless the age-old seas washed in
Against the granite and the sandstone floor
Now swings a ghostly sea
Majestically.
And plangent tides still bear tall mystic spars
Or storms toss helpless waters to the stars
And level them again.
For here on purple mesa and the rose-gold hills
Below the towering range
The far sea music not quite heard
Haunts man with racial dreams
Of cogent forces that primordial stirred
His ancient quest,
And swings in far concentric circles
Yet unguessed
Creation's endless change.

INTERVALS

A sudden field of daisies in the sun
Whose snow and gold give half the tang
Of fennel, mint, and pennyroyal;
And wish to break off one
Yields full a score of unearthed branches
Redolent with far-off flashes of remembrance. . . .

A mountain range snow-capped
Against a sky range of soft cumulus clouds in movement,
All rimmed in lapis-lazuli. . . .
A pussy-willow tree whose silver buds
Burst into golden fragrance
And drop their pollen gold on crystal brook
Or give it to the wind. . . . .
A group of birches gleaming white,
And at a roadside curve, through oaks and maples,
This interval:
One shapely spruce, grey-blue, and one green pine,
Two fringed larch trees,
And one big mountain ash aglow with orange berries. . . .
A winter rain turned suddenly to ice,
Encasing shrub and tree and vine
With frozen iridescence
When sunshine falls upon the dazzling scene.
A voice of silver bells—the wind plays through them
To shatter in a mass of glittering fragments
That fall upon the shining crusted snow. . . .
A wind-lashed stunted pine at Timberline
Against a sunset sky. . . .
The flight of swallows, and
The muted voice of some old violin
Across a garden full of blooming flowers. . . .

The curve of sculptured form,
The glow of painted scene,
Old books to read before a gleaming fire. . . .
The soft full cloud at night,
The miracle of dawn,
And far-off stars. . . .

Such intervals as these make up life's loveliness:
Sweetness and light are textured of reality.

WISHING

I wish I had a wishing ring and wishes to come true:
It is often I am weary of the things I have to do.
I would wish for wings of silver that would swiftly be unfurled
And magic golden sandals to walk the wide ways of the world.
Then—there would be an end to wishing,
For with wings, I'd want to stay;
And with magic golden sandals,
I should *never* go away!

THE LAUGHING ONES

These are the laughing ones—a willow,
Gold California poppies, ripening wheat,
A slim white birch, rainbows, blue chickory,
A gay brown fiddler on a village street.
And there is laughter in the shallow brook
In April, and a house-finch coral-throated
Near a nest—laughter in a lovely book
Of poems through whose lines fresh winds have
floated.
Laughter is a precious thing—
Fragile as the fabric of a white moth's wing.

THERE IS NO WORD

To one who loves the hills there is no word
To tell the beauty or to catch the mood:
Sometimes they stand remote, proud, cold, un-
stirred;
Now they are blithe, and now again they brood
Sullen and sinister. They speak in rude
Rough tongue, or soft as silver-throated bird.
In darkened chasms, on white peaks, is heard
The wind's wild cannonade. The solitude
Of spruce and pine snow-laden; silent trails;

The glint of sun-shot water; aspen trees,
Straight, white, and gleaming; soft transparent veils
Of mist; the slanting rains; vast melodies
Of waterfalls; small alpine flowers; the swarm
Of stars like golden bees night's blue hive fills;
Rockslide and avalanche, drama of storm. . . .
—Yet to know these is not to know the hills.

THE TRAIL

In Spring

Soft is the April air and a soft wind stirring
Mysteries of growing things in the warm earth now;
Coral buds are opening on the cottonwoods and maples
And little silver catkins peep from slender aspen bough.
Mountain flowers appearing, shyly here or flaunting boldly—
Though the sweetest flowers of springtime tend to hide themselves away—
Blue beside a granite boulder, blue against a rounded hillside,
Blue anemones rise quaintly from their Quaker stalks of grey;

Tangled thickets of wild cherry lean far over
deep-cut canyons,
Blooming slips of wildwood plum tree wanton
with the ancient pine;
Dawn is now a thing exultant and the night is
full of splendor,
And all the day is flooded with the April gleam
and shine.
There are birdnotes from the branches, some are
golden, some are silver;
There seems a breathless waiting, something
calls expectantly.
Oh, my dear one, leave the lowlands, leave the
way of town and city—
For Love is standing on the trail and beckons
you and me.

OPEN SESAME

I know a place where the rainbows go
To the pot of gold that gleams;
I know a door that opens wide
Into the land of dreams.

I have a lamp the genii gave
And a garden enchanted true,
But my Open Sesame, dear, is vain
Unless you speak it, too.

SPRING

She was dressed as for a revel
And she danced in madcap glee,
Saucily in dear dishevel
She tossed her golden curls at me.
Shyly sweet she blew toward me
Kisses filled with witchery.
Bright flowers were in her fingers—
Exquisitely the fragrance lingers—
And her laugh was like the thrushes when they sing,
Ah, she spilled in tragic measure
Her enchanting magic treasure—
But I saw the soul of Summer in the coquetry of Spring.

DIDACTICISM

Have the sweet rains that come in spring
  Unity or law?
Is all glorious blossoming
  Without flaw?
Does star set for sister star
  Its magnitude?
Was ever rule or gauge or bar
  For youthful mood?

ILLITERATE

"You have not read,"
My teacher said,
Sharply aloof
In his reproof.
Perhaps he knew—
As teachers do—
But still it set me wondering:
How have I learned
As years have turned,
The sign and reason
Of tide and season?
Cloud forms I know
Of rain and snow,
Of storm on high peak thundering;
I have perceived
What winds have cleaved
Wide waters, ocean sundering;
The book of stars
Often unbars
Romance of far Eastern bazaars;
I know the arch
Of elm and larch,
The shape and reach
Of oak and beech,
The name of shrub and vine and flower,
Their time of bloom—the day, the hour;
I know the track
Of furry pack
Bent on fierce, bloody thundering;

I have scanned
Grey dunes of sand
Write tragedy upon the land;
And marked at night
Wild ducks in flight
Cut symbols strange against the light;
And still untaught
Long have I sought
What geologic ages wrought;
I have observed
As years have swerved
From war to peace
In grim caprice
Man hating man,
Man helping man,
Man sweeping far the bars of space,
Lifting a hope-illumined face. . . .
Can it be said
I have not read?
Miracles outnumbering,
Life's open screed
Who runs may read.

MIRACLES

"Every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle."

—*Walt Whitman.*

Dawn is a miracle,
The illimitable scroll thrown back
From the illuminated script of a new day.

Dusk is a miracle, the open fire,
Fire-touched humanity—
Man-spirit touched by the flame-spirit,
Aspiring, sacrificial.
A garden is a miracle:
Blooming flowers moved gently by the wind,
A liquid wind made red and peacock blue and
green and gold
As it pours soundlessly through roses and passes
into pansies—
An orchid swirl;
The scent that is born when the breeze mates
with the hyacinth;
Tremulous rainbow tones when the sun woos
rain,
Or the floating gossamer that is spun in the sun-
shine
After the dew.
Music is a miracle:
One long golden trill of the wild canary,
A perfect cello tone, the aching ecstasy of a
violin obligato,
The voice of the mountain stream or the wind
in the canyon,
A sweet voice singing in simplicity, an organ
fugue,
The nocturne of the first full stars on a moon-
less night,
Or the sweeping melodies of moolight;
The vast ensemble of the sea. . . .
All these are miracles.

Clean sport and all who nobly play;
Productive toil and all who toil productively;
Creative thought and all who think creatively,
Constructive service and all who serve—
All these are miracles. And these:
The awakening of young life to love,
The exquisite wonder, the bitter-sweet of fear
and yearning;
Home-making, father and mother task-bound,
Serving the hearth as though it were a shrine,
And children as young gods, that they may grow
and serve their time and be
Home-builders and builders of great nations.
And the grey years are miracles:
Life beyond the vibrant peak,
The calmer, broader slope that marks the rim
of the world we know,
Repose conquered from grim struggle,
Made to glow by experience remembered.
Every hour is a miracle.
Every life is a miracle if that life have vision—
Life without vision is no miracle. . . .
But who shall define vision?

IDYLL

The philosopher is every lad along a country
lane—
A willow switch stirs up the dust or flicks off
heads of grain;

The cows wind home, their udders full, a low
contented moo,
Their warm sweet breath, the crushed new
grass, a tang of mint and clover;
The bars are up, the cows are home, the chores
of day are over.
But long, long thoughts have come to life,
thoughts of an ancient strain—
The philosopher is every lad along a country
lane.

SCIOTO ROADS

The roads were dusty there,
But streams were clear;
The little houses mean;
But hills were green.
The roads went in and out
And curved about
A house, a creek, a hill,
With careless skill.
Grown close with tall white thorn
Or fields of corn
Or purple ironweed dense
Against a zigzag fence,
Pawpaw and sassafras,
Or cool deep grass,
They skirted hillsides high
Where wild birds cry
In oak and elm and beech

Which wild grapes reach;
And slanting hillsides hold
Forsythia's pale gold,
Spicewood perfume
And redbud bloom. . . .
Oxteams lumber up and down
Taking logs and ties to town;
Boys club for a ripe persimmon;
Berry patches lure bent women;
Barefoot girls with eggs and butter
Pass where elder blossoms flutter—
But in winter when it snowed
No one walked that drifted road,
Though it still went in and out
And curved about
A house, a creek, a hill
With careless skill.

AWAY FROM THE HILLS

Spring has touched Mendota, and her silver
waves are gleaming;
Willow trees are golden all along the wooded
shore,
Glinting oar and paddle send the swift canoe
careening—
*But I see the lift of mountains as they rise
before my door.*

Green and greener stretch the meadows, and the
wild flowers brightly showing;
Lilting wrens and busy robins build their nests
in every tree;
Orchard blossoms falling with the vagrant
breezes blowing—
*In my mountains now are blooming furry
blue anemone. . . .*

Spring is in the lowlands, all the world is full
of singing;
Lilac bloom and violets and golden daffodils,
Cherry bloom and roses—all sweetly perfume
flinging.
Spring is in the lowlands—*but it's springtime
in my hills!*

ANOTHER VOLUME

Another volume from a pen unpractised.
What reason for it, what its end and aim?
A moment on the bookstalls, a cursory review-
ing—
That its little ripple, that its little fame.
What merit has it—some high noble passion?
Swift shaft of irony? allegory? wit?
Vital figures living in Chaucerian fashion?
Echoes of old legends—what the core of it?

Rich voluptuous images, rebellious mood or new,
Vigor of conception, charm or grace or mirth,
Lilting lines melodic, sonnets shapen true—
Strikes it at our social system, hollowness and sham?
What the touchstone to it, what its test of worth?
Lucid, salutary, packed with epigram?
Intellect or scholarship, or analytic power,
Or lyric saturation, a vapor in an hour?
Is there sweep of spirit, a large and urbane freedom?
Or is its mood anemic, gulled with sordid strife?
Gives there moving pathos, gives there glow or valor,
High human drama that holds the mirror up to life?
Not all moods are heroic, life has level moments. . . .
Here may be a quip of scorn, again austerity;
Here may be a broken lutestring or an image not quite captured,
Here may be caprice and whimsy, there again sincerity.
Great art is organic, life is fragmentary—
Small gracious moments, quiet and serene:
Sorrow veiled in lilac scarves, kneeling in a cloister,
Beauty walking gravely where tall birches lean,
Farce in motley—a merry roister-doister
Slipping her mask to Tragedy before the crucial scene.

There will be no other volume, there will be an
end to singing
When the human spirit vanquished into utter
void is hurled.
There will be no other volume, there will be an
end to singing
When is left the windy vastness of a dead and
empty world.

BLUE COVERLIDS

I shall make myself many poems . . .
What my great-grandmother put into blue
coverlids,
My grandmother into sunburst quilts,
My mother into exquisite embroidery
I shall put into words.

I shall remember the lavender and mignonette,
The bit of cedar I shall not forget,
To keep them fragrant and the moths away.
And then as carefully
Fold close and turn the key
Upon this dower of mine.
Years after, women of my line
Will shake them out, smile slow and say,
"How patient they were, the women of an ear-
lier day."

I shall make myself many poems . . .
All the hope threaded to exquisite embroidery,
All the faith minutely stitched into quilts,
All the love that lay in the loom of blue cover-
lids,
I shall put into words.

RECOMPENSE

Some of us know only bare, dull walls
Unhung by tapestries, forlorn of art;
We walk care-driven down gaunt cheerless
halls —
But bear the dreams of ages in our heart.

BEAUTY

Beauty is too fragile to be caught
And sheltered as a constant, changeless thing—
The slant of sunshine on some ancient spire,
The soaring flight of swallow on the wing.

ESCAPE

Yellow little daffodil,
Resting in the soil
There beside the garden path
While I delve and toil,

Why should you be golden,
I so drab and grey?
Presto, dancing daffodil,
I shall run away—

Run to where the redbud burns
There against the sky,
Silver dewdrops scattering
As I hasten by;

Run to where hepaticas
Trail the hillside way,
Where among the mossy rocks
The little people play:

I shall find Titania
And brave Oberon—
Farewell, golden daffodil,
I am eager to be gone!

DO THE TREES REMEMBER?

Do the trees remember
The nesting bird,
Or the violin treasure
Soft melodies heard?

Do proud poplars
Ever care
For the golden stars
They wear in their hair?

Do human hearts measure,
Do human hopes rise,
At a rainbow conquering
Storm-swept skies?

TRIAD

Knowledge

In my eagerness for the rose
I failed to see the thorn tree.
Now I gather roses more discreetly.

Understanding

He only can companion me
Who has known high mountains
And learned of them.

Wisdom

Not knowing life, I sang of grief and sorrow.
But now that I have looked on life,
I sing no songs.

WHAT CAN THERE BE BUT SILENCE?

What can there be but silence?
  Deep love, as hate,
Eludes expression—ever
  Inarticulate.

What can there be but sorrow ?
  And brackish tears?
Joy makes no alliance
  With human years.

Oh, count it never
  Grief or pain
That on the morrow
  We part again.

What can there be but silence?
  Deep love, as hate,
Eludes expression—ever
  Inarticulate.

ANSWER

You like the glare, the noise, the show;
I like the hearthfire burning low.
You like the pomp and parade;
I like pathways strange and slow.
Because you love appearance so,
Must I in motley be arrayed?
If in revels your days go,
Must my soul walk in masquerade?

THE WOMAN SPEAKS

A flaming arc—your tossed match fell among
my flowers
And then was dark. But from the murmurous
gloom
Made languid through the early evening hours
By heavy fragrance of some hidden bloom,
Your words come with the marvel of your work:
Of ancient legend, of wide wanderings,
Of distant ventures where grim dangers lurk,
Of half-forgotten, olden, far-off things.
And then you went, out to the swift exchange
That men know as the business of life
Where there is still the tourney and the strange
Wild joy of lance on lance in gallant strife.
Here are my flowers, and now against the dark
Only the memory of your words—a flaming arc.

THE FIDDLE SOUNDS A LONG NOTE

The fiddle sounds a long note
  And I am far away
Where sweeping woodlands climb a hill
  Above a blue, blue bay.

The fiddle sounds a gay note,
  It sets the blood a-dance
Only to remember
  A brown-eyed burning glance.

The fiddle sounds a sad note
  And all the world is gray,
For youth and love have passed now
  Whatever fiddles say.

DECORUM

Come, come, my friend, this is no way to do;
If Death comes, do not scream and shriek
And clutch at things. For surely you will rue,
Such petulance—you who ever seek
The dignified. Death is no thug;
You need not bolt your room or barricade
The door with chest or rug—
A child acts so; it is no gallant way,
Or well-bred or decorous. No dismay
Should trouble your composure. Tall and proud
Meet Death at the door—nor speak one word
  too loud.

OF A NOSE TO HIS GRINDSTONE

Thou circle adamant,
Pause thou a little in thy roundward course,
I pray thee have remorse. . . .
O thou inexorable,
Whereon I am forespent,
Thy revolutions stay a little time;
No sooner one than the next whirl
Comes in to rhyme:
It is a crime
To play the sedulous ape
To Ixion.
Oh, soon or late,
Be done.
I pray thee show some little lull—
Must nose grow sharp and soul forever dull?

TO VISIT THE QUEEN

"Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?"
"I've been to London to visit the queen."
"Pussy cat, pussy cat, what did you there?"
"I frightened a little mouse under her chair."

"Pussy cat, pussy cat, how looked the queen?"
"I cannot tell you so busy I've been."
"Pussy cat, pussy cat, what did she wear?"
"I frightened a little mouse under her chair."
"Pussy cat, pussy cat, what of her house?"
"Ah, but at London I saw a fine mouse."

TRAIL IN SUMMER

Up and up through sheer strong ramparts,
  Strong winds flail,
Up and up past stubborn buttress
  Flings our trail.

Scorching sunlight in our faces,
  Summer days;
Shimmering heat wave dizzy traces
  These high ways;

Granite piled on giant granite
  Burns it back;
Pine and aspen bravely span it—
  Windy track!

Oh, the glorious mountain challenge—
  Sun and gale,
Up and on through health and gladness
  Flings our trail.

MOUNTAIN SUNSET

Swift comes a miracle into the west—
The shadows lengthen palpably along
Ebbed evening's rim, the mountained rampart
    strong;

Pulsating shafts of fire still tip the crest
High on the range where silences arrest
The lingering notes of the diurnal song.
New glory mounts into the flame-flung throng
Begun in clouds in glowing gold compressed.
Against the splendid sky on farthest range
There lies a turquoise peace, though near at hand
Rises sheer indigo—a sudden change
As twilight runs into our mountain land.
Not even dark conceals grace infinite
Grown from the form of hills against the night.

SILVER SPRUCE AND ASPEN

In silver spruce and aspen he found peace:
For he was one to whom life had done hurt,
One hurt too deep to lift a valiant head
Or square tired shoulders. He was one to go
Silent, grim-lipped, white-faced (for he had bled
In heart) away from the familiar scene
To seek for peace. He sought for peace in towns
But found no peace; he sought in the serene
And cloistered ways abroad, but found no peace.
Sometimes in books or music he half heard
Sustaining voices; then they too would cease.
The empty days passed by, empty and blurred.

Lonely he came at last to lonely hills
Which seemed sternly forbidding, stark, austere—
A seemly place to suffer: a solace here
He would not even seek; he had foresworn
The search. And sorrow could be borne.
His work now filled his days. And work that fills
The days is man's best medicine and food.
It was not long until a softer mood
Ran imperceptibly into his heart.
He learned the stars, made friends with trees, communed
With peaks, heard music till his soul attuned
To the vast symphony. He was a part
Of all the solemn beauty. Peace was his.
He would not grow the hermit or recluse
But in the memory of the old sick pain
Find strength to meet the struggle once again,
As one who through the clamor of desire
Feels always the slow silent urge of faith,
The calm and steadfast hope—the eager fire
Of youth grown down to glowing flame. So cogent is
The clean swift beauty of the aspen tree,
The brooding timelessness of silver spruce.

"PATIENCED BY PAIN"

Our lives are leoparded
By many spots;
We cannot change or hide away
The blemish of lost hopes—
The many blots,
Dark ghosts of a departed day
When dreams unshepherded
Ran bleating down the slopes
And lost themselves
In briars and brambles and the quick morass
Of disillusionment;
There are stains
Of visions lost,
Of opportunities let weakly pass
Of compromise as lightly tossed
As April rains;
There have been broken vows
And halos quickly taken
From broad brows. . . .
Oh, it is far from peace
To wish a shining, candid soul
And know one's own is barred
By faults
And failure and caprice,—
While on some sunny level,
Fortune starred,
Serene and calm and whole
Another stands untouched,
Ungiven and unspent.

Yet not till we are flecked and shaken
And know life's travail
Can we understand the pathos of lives smutched
By pain
Perhaps when life's poor fragments are made
whole
And sudden light upon the clouds is shed.
We may attain
From life so leoparded
A shining, candid soul.

EL-AZIRIYEH

On the eastern slope of Mount Olivet
Bethany lies silent.
But the heart of Martha is heavy,
The heaviness of many waters is upon the heart
of Martha.
Joseph is speaking, Joseph the beautiful singer,
Singing the Song of Songs, Solomon's song, in
the evening:
"All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and
cassia,
Out of ivory palaces . . .
And upon thy right hand stands the queen in
gold of Ophir . . . ."

Into his song there crept a wistful tone;
Would he go on, "Hearken, O daughter and consider;
Forget thine own people and thy father's house . . ."?
Nay, Joseph had an understanding heart.
His voice came out of the shadows:
"The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir . . .
And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift. . . .
The king's daughter is all glorious, her clothing wrought of gold."
But upon these throbbing words there came a solemn tone:
"I the Lord thy God am a jealous God,
Visiting the iniquities of the fathers
Upon the children unto the third and fourth generations."—
Her father had looked like a royal one
Propped in purple pillows on his bench at the table
This Passover night. His voice austere,
"Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days
May be long upon earth.. . ."

Joseph's words were other:
"Behold, thou art fair, my love, thou hast dove's eyes.
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and
gone.
The flowers appear on the earth; the time of
the singing of birds
Is come . . .
And the vine with the tender grape.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

Martha, remembering her father, cried,
"O, my beloved, outside the lilies bloom —
The crimson lilies in the fields of Judea.
The wild bees visit the honeycomb . . .
But the counsel of my father is wise:
You have said that our God is not your god,
Not the only Jehovah;
And my father, powerful among the Jews,
Excellent in the sight of Israel,
Withholds his blessing.
O Joseph, singer of the fullness and beauty of
life,
I have taken a bunch of hyssop
And put blood on the lintels of my heart.
The God of the Jews will pass over
And the law will be kept;
But sorrow will be my bread;
With sorrow will my cup be filled—
But I shall dwell in the house of my fathers."

. . . . . .

And again on the eastern slope of Mount
Olivet
Bethany lies silent.

Only the nightbird's song in the pomegranate
And the murmur of a wild bee lost in a thorn-flower.
The Master has gone,
Secretly withdrawing to Ephraim, on the border of the wilderness;
This last miracle had quickened the Pharisees,
And they plotted the death of the Nazarene.
Lazarus, whom Jesus loved,
Had broken his cerements—the love of the Master
Had been stronger than the tomb.
And now Lazarus and Mary had gone a few furlongs
Toward Ephraim.
And Martha sat alone, remembering.
What was it the Messiah had said—
"Mary hath chosen that good part"?
Mary, who served by her loving,
Who heard without care or trouble,
The words that meant life and beauty . . .
And Martha thought now upon Joseph,
Heard his Song of Songs
On this evening, years after the words of her father
Had led her to vows of devotion
To the Law of the Jews—
"That thy days may be long on the earth."
(He had long been gone to his fathers.)
And now they were followers of Jesus,
Even Joseph of Arimathea.

Did Joseph remember his singing?—
"Rise up, my love, my fair one,
For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and
gone.
The flowers appear on the earth . . .
The singing of birds is come."
And the Master had said "That good part
Shall not be taken away. . . ."
A bunch of hyssop, Judean lilies of crimson—
The garden was fair, she had heard,
Of Joseph of Arimathea. . . .

IN A JAPANESE GARDEN

Wild Plum

Are these silvery blossoms
Still perchance the snow,
Or the pure petals of the plum
Softly drifting, drifting low
Where the waters flow?

Maples

The grey mist
Rolling back from the sea's deep blue
Shows the sudden sunshine striking through
Crimson maples
Jewelled by the silver dew.

Lotus

I see the floating white blossoms
And pink buds
Of broad green and silver pads.
The lotus like a star
Is the chalice of a new day.

Chrysanthemum

Many-in-one
The golden flower, chrysanthemum,
I see.
The gold petals of my thoughts
Fold tenderly about my love for thee.

Iris

In Horikiri
The iris blooms
Under orange lanterns
And in the twilight haze
The white ones become luminous.
Radiant are the emanations
From the blossoms of my love
As the back-turning petals
Of white iris
In Horikiri.

The Willow

As the bare willow
Etches itself against the snow
So the fragile tracery of my memory
Pictures the time with thee,
My beloved.

The Pine

Over the arched bridge
Stands a pine,
One gnarled branch cutting athwart my vision
Which holds far off
Snow-crowned Fujijama.
The green pine lives for a thousand years;
Fuji is immortal:
Even so my love survives
The falling petals of my garden.

SATSUMA

The years can touch to beauty many things . . .
And your Satsuma centuries ago was old.
But rare and lovely as your treasure is—
Ivory as mellow as some carven god,
And dulled blue figures interlaid with gold,
Here faintly flushed as cherry bloom at morning's kiss,
And jade and bronzed red, and this
Strange Oriental shade the Tyrian knew;
Not shallow as our later manner is,
But like some old mosaic deep struck through,
The pattern marks an old forgotten art—
More than the wealth of years about it clings.
Beauty to delight forevermore
Must carry deeply hidden in its heart
Some high and human joy or pain or lore.
Sure in those early days the craftsman's toil
Was still to catch from out the welter and the moil
Some far, ineffably rich gleam
And fasten it in form—the poet's dream.

GARDEN PATHS

Sunshine on the pathway,
And out beyond, the meadow,
Willow by the brookside
Where the shadows play;
But within the garden
Fern and flower and fruit tree
Speak not merely happiness
And tranquillity.

Sunshine on the pathway,
Hill and sky above it,
Birdnotes in a golden song
Through the golden day;
Yet within the garden
Wren and finch and swallow
Touch to wistful music
Human hearts must know.

Sunshine on the pathway,
Keep me from forgetting
Each heart has its silences
Bravely hid away.
Star beyond the sunset,
Bird of dawn and dew
Teach my soul in garden paths
Roses and rue.

I WOULD NOT GAZE FOREVER ON THE RANGE

I would not gaze forever on the range:
The peaks that rise into eternal snows
Are not the daily comrades that man knows.
Our human life is one of trivial change,
And isolate from the eternal—strange
That he in rarest moments grandeur knows—
Then he can contemplate eternal snows.
I would not gaze forever on the range.
Foothills more nearly parallel our days;
In fold on fold where clouds and shadows shift,
Mist-draped or radiant or wrapped in haze—
These are the heights to which we daily lift:
We know that farther on great mountains rise,
That though unseen, the range sweeps azure skies.

AT THE CONCERT

At the concert when the master brings
The organ to a throbbing life of sound,
Or the violinist over muted strings
Draws a slow bow, or the round
True notes of open strings soar high,
Poignant as a half-caught human cry—

I sit attentive, calm and casual,
Calm and attentive, while the trombones glow
With kindled fires, and the coronets fling
Carillons like old Spanish bells,
And the bass viol swells
Magnificent rhythms, and the cellos sing. . . .
Calm and attentive—but within,
Radiance, a wild exultation, a swift pain,
A surging aspiration, and a thin
Bright hope not to be felt again
Until once more some great musician's hand
Can touch to life the barren places where I
stand.

WINDOW AT NIGHT

Across the casement comes the first soft stir
Of the evening wind. I pull the curtains back
And see upon the clouds a golden track
Left by the afterglow. A fragrant blur,
The garden lengthens out as though it were
A place enchanted—ivory, gold, rose, black. . . .
The brooding silence grows elegiac
As stars shine silver far above the fir.
There is a loneliness that comes with night
As though grief gave to joy a solemn pledge.
But through the darkness soon you will be come
Up through the darkened garden to the light.
Love is a taper on the window ledge
To light you home, beloved, to light you home.

CANYON IN SEPTEMBER

An Indian maid in moccasins,
Low song in slender throat—
The wind came down the canyon—
Shy as gazelle and fleet,
Lithe and swift but with a note
Soft as a lute, lute sweet.
A warrior young with arrows slung,
Flamboyant colors flaunted,
Erect and taut, with bow well-strung
Swept proudly down the canyon;
In high clear call undaunted
He sought the Indian maiden.
And now the council fires burn
And blue haze shrouds their secrets
(Few are they that ever learn
What lone places shelter).
But still are sounds of moccasined feet,
Still are glorious colors,
Still the low notes shyly sweet
And a rush through pine and piñon—
A conquering lover, proud and fleet
Of the wind come down the canyon.

AFTERGLOW

I think the gentle lady of the evening
Must bring her jewels out to gaze upon—
Too lovely save for solitude and silence,
But kept for dreams until the day is done.

AUTUMN

Reluctantly she lingers
Loath to lay aside the splendor and the richness
Of her cloth of gold
And crimson,
To take once more
The nun-like grey
And coif and veil of white.

OCTOBER

This is the hearthstone month
When Summer with her tasks all done
Rests for awhile beside the fire.
Her maple candles are alight
And sumac flames;
Asters and goldenrod in bowls of jade,
Baskets of perfect apples are beside her,
And brown nuts;
Books lie on the table—
But she is lost in hazy, fragrant dreams.

THE AUTUMN TRAIL

Gold are the hills and gold are the valleys
below;
The harvest is garnered—the fruits, the gourd,
Brown ripened nuts and late berries a-glow—
The harvest is garnered and stored.
A haze hangs thin over valley and hill
While the warm breeze is touched by an autumn
chill.
October is now half gone.

Gold are the valleys and golden the hills,
And golden the trails that upward run
Through stretches where resinous pinewood fills
The air with fragrance and warmth of sun.
At last valleys darken, the twilight falls,
And far in some canyon a night bird calls:
But our campfire burns warm.

Golden the lights that still haunt the west,
Gold are the hills in the shadows, and gold
Are the thoughts on the trail near the crest
That we took when Love beckoned of old.
The trails of tomorrow bring new heights to
climb;
Perhaps we shall reach golden crests in due
time:
Our October is only half done.

AUTUMN MORNING

The cathedral bell chimed five o'clock,
The maple branch bent crimson to the rising sun,
And I arose
Swiftly.
For the morning holds a fragrant secret, close
To the crowing of the cock,
And he who rises early is the one
Spendthriftly
To receive such secrets as the dawn is made of,
Not understood by one who lies a-bed,
A Jack-o'-Dreams.
I missed too much by five o'clock;
But still a shimmer of vague iridescent wings
And little flurried whisperings
Of elfin schemes
Yet came at five,
And every stock and stone was vibrantly alive.
And quaint to tell,
Caught by the fruity smell
Of crushed blue grapes,
I wandered softly in the shade of
The old arbor, when ahead
Suddenly I saw a maze of flying fairy feet
Dancing on the purple grapes—
Strange vintage, autumn-sweet.

LOOM OF OCTOBER

Woof of frost and warp of sun
Make a Persian carpet;
Rich the varied patterns run,
Hues of dawn and sunset—
Of long grasses tawny gold,
Line on line and fold on fold,
Crimson sumac, scarlet woodbine,
Bronze of briar and shrub and grapevine;
Tyrian hues in thistle, aster,
Green in depth no ancient master
Ever quite attained.
Fields and wood are stained
By autumn dyes
In earth and air and skies.
Tapestries of royal line
Grow from oak and beech and pine,
Poplars, maples, linden, ash,
Hickory, walnut—colors flash
And flame and glow and fade
To tarnished silver, somber jade.
Woof of frost and warp of sun,
Cloth of gold from aspen spun.
Silent weavers, swift and sober
At the loom of October.

RETURN

That is the beech tree where the swing was
hung;
There the blue bee-ricks where gold honey
clung;
And the road winds on among the briars
Where once we burned the spring bonfires
Of raked up leaves and stalks and roots
And long grape cuttings and wrinkled fruits
From the orchard strip by the garden beds.
The path is lost; rank grass overspreads
The once trim lawn.
And what was home
Seems like one loved whence life has flown. . . .
I close again the crooked gate
Of a scene once dear grown desolate.

WALL IN YARROW

Redbud, lilac, and Japanese quince
Bloomed on a wall in Yarrow—
Blossoms shimmered in sunshine tints,
Redbud, lilac, and Japanese quince—
No flowers so fair have blossomed since;
Bare boughs shelter the sparrow. . . .
Redbud, lilac, and Japanese quince
Bloomed on a wall in Yarrow.

INSIGNIA

Those only who know dreams have power to see
The secret fires of life our souls must show,
Invisible to others though they be.
These seeing ones perceive and surely know
As over glowing dreams we casual throw
The cloak of commonplace (but carefully),
The emblem of the dream fraternity.
A light set in a life of course must glow,
But casual mantles will avoid the blame
So easily heaped on dreamers and their dreams.
A dream—to one who dreams not—futile seems.
And so we wear in secret our life's flame—
The flame of life, so often shaped a cross,
The symbol of life's gain and of life's loss.

STOLEN FIRE

From the burning rush and flaring tallow dip,
From fragrant wax of berries tapered fire,
From coal-oil lamp or spread-out phosphorous
strip,
To slender filament of silver wire
In blown-glass bulb, or radium's fearful yield
Infinitesimal—man has sought light.
Blossoms of light spring from the country field,

And whirling beams direct aircraft in flight,
Tall spires of light reach to the bluest skies,
And searchlights play upon the angry seas;
In towns tall pyramids of light arise;
The roadways swarm with bright flame-laden
bees.
Let man beware lest he grow arrogant!
Prometheus once was named a miscreant.

WILD HONEY

And all unknowing with his rod he touched
Wild honey—thrust it in the honeycomb.
Aghast and silently his fellows watched,
Wise in the warning that he had not known.
An amber drop of honey on his rod,
New fallen, free, a luscious blessing, food
Like manna fallen in an alien wood:
So sinned young Jonathan against his God.
Kowing not of vows he was not frightened—
"See, I pray, my eyes have been enlightened."
We too may eat wild honey (innocent
Of oath or vow or kingly covenant)
Fresh from the comb, beneath a bending bush
While those about gaze on in sudden hush.

THE BALLAD OF THE SILKEN SCARF

"Oh, who rides through the forest so green—
Is it my lord so brave?" said she.
"It is not your young lord so brave," they said;
"He rides in a far countree."
So she wove a forest-green thread of silk
In her silken scarf as white as milk.

"Oh, who is a-winding his silver horn—
Is it my lord so brave?" said she.
"It is not your young lord so brave," they said;
"He sounds his horn in a far countree.
So she wove a silver thread of silk
In her silken scarf as white as milk.

"Oh, whose banners fly so red, so red—
Are they of my lord so brave?" said she.
"They are not those of your young lord so brave;
His banners fly in a far countree."
So she wove a crimson thread of silk
In her silken scarf as white as milk.

"These flowers as blue as the bluest blue—
Sent me them my lord so brave?" said she.
"He sent them not your young lord so brave,
He dwells in a far countree."
So she wove a thread of the bluest silk
In her silken scarf as white as milk.

"Oh, whose voice sounds like a golden bell—
Is it of my lord so brave?" said she
"It is not the voice of your young lord so brave;
His voice is heard in a far countree."
So she wove a golden thread of silk
In her silken scarf as white as milk.

"Oh, black clouds cover the sun's bright light—
Is it smoke from his campfires?" said she.
"It is not smoke from your lord's campfires.
He is dead in a far countree."
So she wove a black, black thread of silk
In her silken scarf as white as milk.

"Oh, who will pray for a passing soul—
For a passing soul?" said she.
"All poor people of your young lord so brave
Who died in a far countree."

And she hanged herself in her silken scarf
From a green forest tree.
And they found her dead in her silken scarf
And gone to a far countree.

SO CLOTHO SPUN

So Clotho spun another living thread,
Tossing the gossamer out lightly on the years. . . .
Each day she spun beyond her sister's shears,
Past Lachesis, who weaves Life's varied web,
Each slender thread of human joys and tears;
Nor paused they once for human hopes or fears,
But wove the web of destined living thread.

So came your life across this life of mine
And interwoven now the patterns run,
Some rich in hue, some full of sheen and shine—
A tapestry of days careless begun:
The web to be a planned or tangled one
Gives still to see. But Clotho sure has spun.

THE LIGHTS OF FALLERONE

The great prow flings the furrow wide,
The long waves roll, the sky
Swings slow its thousand stars
And silent all the sea ways lie.
Three bells boom out to warn the watch.
I walk the lonely deck,
A lonely man with memories
Too poignant to be held in check,
Remembered scenes like etchings cut
Upon a copper plate. . . .

Three years from home, three pregnant years
At work, aft, deck and fore,
Fo'c's'le and nest and sails and gears,
At word of man or mate,
With shore leaves in the Orient
And life in alien guise,
Kaleidoscopic, colorful—
Slim girls with slanting eyes,
And merchantmen and coolie boys,
Strange ships from strange old lands,
And battleships in war array,
And clumsy, quaint sampans. . . .
Home never seemed so sweet a word.
The years are done—Alone
I stand remembering.
A feel of land is in the air,
Strange rumors now the sea-winds bring.
I slowly pace the deck—and there
The lights of Fallerone!

Across the years, across the years,
Symbolic lights have shone
But never shone so blessedly
As the lights of Fallerone.
The great prow flings the furrows wide,
The long waves roll, the sky
Swings slow its thousand stars
And silent all the sea ways lie.
Four bells boom out to warn the watch.
I walk the deck alone.
My homeland lifts a torch to me,
The lights of Fallerone!

ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT

He had gone nightly out on No Man's Land,
A ghastly sally
With bomb and hand grenade. . . .
The death-flares were the street lights of his alley,
And he went creeping there,
Went creeping, skulking over bodies—
A bloody mess some other bombs had made.
Barbed wire and burrows
And narrow blood-wet furrows . . .
Then a death flare,
Sting of high explosives,
No air . . . no air . . .
Dextrous fling of missile,
Then the high shrill whistle
Of more Death about.
Then an inching back through No Man's Land,
Burrows and barbed wire,
Then the front-line trenches,
And nightmare sleep again.
Then out once more
Into that stricken valley
To bring dead comrades in,
And skulking in some burrow,
Inching through some furrow—
Prone till a shell had landed and cluttered up his alley—

Then through the awful stenches
By skilful computation
He can drag much mutilation
Back to the lines, before he sleeps again.

War over, peace declared, and he at work once more—
A professor of literature on a college campus,
Teaching drama,
In the shadow of blue hills.
Sometimes when the class is idle
Or sophisticate or quite indifferent,
The war years open out in sudden panorama
And his tense voice shrills
In a sudden sharp command, for his nerves go sore.
Once outside, the reprimanded
Criticizes, "Oh, he just wants to stamp us
With his academic stamp. What's he know of life—
A college teacher?"
But one more tolerant, putting out her hand to reach her
Powder puff exclaims, "Oh, he thrills
Me with his cave-man stuff;
I like 'em rough.
Don't mind his little tantrums,
No harm is really meant—
It's only his artistic temperament."

SLOW GROWTH

His gift was slow in growing,
  Critics say,
His genius ripened late.
How far they are from knowing
  That which lay
Year after year beneath burden so great
  There was no way
  But silence.

Are acorns quick in making
  Tall oak trees
When ponderous stones surround;
When the young branch is taking
  Winds that freeze,
Or roots reach out to shallow, sterile ground?
  One sees
  Slow growth.

SNOW-STORM AT TIMBERLINE

The wind began at dawn, died down, then struck
The saddle of the hill we just had climbed
And bent the stubbled grass before its force.
No trees were here to bend, so desolate
The place in this high world at Timberline,
Except an ancient pine lying prone upon
The boulders, beaten to a dwarf, deformed
And twisted like the pines of old Nippon.
Across the draw a ragged cliff stood up,
Its head in somber clouds, but on beyond
The everlasting snow lay on proud peaks.
About our grey plateau a misty veil
Flowed tenuous before the coming storm.
The shaggy peak grew to blurred mystery.
On came the whiteness, sharp and cold and swift.
We sought the Shelter-cabin and a fire.

THE WATER-OUZEL

Stand on the city bridge at any hour
And you will see that grey chap at his play;
His plumage quite the hue of waterfalls,
His pleasure-ground the stones swept bright by spray.

Or in the mountains watch his flutterings
Where swift white-water churns in narrow gorge;
His thin notes come from roaring cataract,
He nests where water anvils beat the forge.

FOREST FIRE

Whispers of little winds low in the leaves,
Rustle of warm winds through tall green trees,
A full resinous fragrance, rich, warm, sweet,
A sharp acrid odor, a hint of heat,
Snap, hiss, crackle, a faint blue smoke,
A whirl of black swept by tawny flame—
Deep in the forest the wild fire broke;
Fast in the wild wake the fire-wind came,
A soughing of branches swept sudden and strong
Like the rush and crash when the storm winds meet:
Crimson streams of fire flowed quickly along
The tall grey grasses and the spruce needles deep;
Red tongues of fire licked the tall pine trees,
Grey twigs fell as though shrivelled by disease;
Broad orange streamers floated everywhere
And bulging puffs of copper smoke filled the molten air.
A pitiable squeaking came from little furry creatures,
Chipmunks and marmot as they scurried helter-skelter;
Mountain sheep and mountain goats leaping to some shelter,
Warned by their instincts—grim, sure teachers—
And the suffocating stenches from the red relentless thing;
Like a plummet dropped a blue-jay with a burning broken wing;

The eagles screamed in anger from the smoke-
beclouded skies;
A sudden rush of slender deer, dumb fright in
liquid eyes. . . .
Now burning brands seem missiles sent,
Projectiles hurled through space,
Now and then a chuckle like mirth malevolent,
A sweeping beauty sinister, a dread and treach-
erous grace;
And conflagration with the sound of thunder
Has pulled a thousand tall trees under.
But men have come in purpose bent
To halt the fire's fierce race.
They fell great trees and dig deep lanes,
They smother out small flames;
With tools and chemicals and wit
At last they curb, they conquer it.
But fire that raged for half a day
Has burned a hundred years away.

SNOWSLIDE

A sharp concussion and a roaring sound,
The roar increasing with a thunder storm
Of smaller noises; then a clean-swept ground
Like a river-bed gone dry; great trees deform,
And riven rocks flowing as water might,
All gathering weight and speed as they come
down
Upon the sleeping silence of the night.
The snowslide rests where was a mountain town.

THE ARBOR

It was but yesterday
And all the arbor leaves were heavy green
Through which the sun poured warm
And touched the new fruit with a golden sheen
When in this luminous way
I heard the words you knew so sweetly how
to say.
And now
The days hold more than hint of evening cold.
See how
The thin leaves are a thin pale beaten gold;
A melancholy wind moves down the rustling
arbor lane
With portent of a sodden autumn rain.
And yet—
Though all is changed—
I cannot quite forget.

BROKEN TREES

And then from sullen clouds the storm swept low
Across the northern range—a sullen range
Mail-clad in ice, a prodigal of snow. . . .
Great spread of cottonwoods, and poplar spires,
Outsweeping arch of elm in golden change,
And doméd maples touched with autumn fires—
A forest growth of years enfoliaged high,
The trees stood out against the lowering sky:

So lately touched by Indian Summer glow—
They took the tragic beauty of the snow.
What if years after boughs may grow again?
Forever will those tragic scars remain.

CHRYSANTHEMUMS

I am in sorrow
And you send to me chrysanthemums—
Tall, stately, perfect flowers;
I think they somehow fit grief sweetly,
For Sorrow ever wears a poignant dignity.
Roses are too gay, the hued ones,
White too sad.
Orchids speak of marriages, lilies of death—
They do not speak me peace.
And all the flowers fall short
Of suiting their soft loveliness to pain
Save these.
Their carven petals seem to hide a heart of grief
While yet entreasuring the sun and air and earth
and stars;
Their very perfume, pungent as the pine,
Is healing.
They will not fade tomorrow, no nor multiplied
tomorrows. . . .
And some of them are silver, some rose, some
gold. . . .
And I would brood on flowers.

My heart would break if I think only on its
grief . . .
My mind must move —
So let me meditate chrysanthemums.

I wonder if were such in Galilee.
I wish that Mary may have had chrysanthe-
mums.

SHALE

Seeing the mountains all about, how could I
know
By fate it was irreconcilable
That I like mountains, too, sometime should
grow?
Majestic mountains lifting to the sky
Proud peaks that every bolt and wind defy,
Eternal granite all inviolable—
Yes, sure, by reaching ever outward so
I would become a mountain by and by.

Now swept by winds and pockmarked by the
rains
And crumbled by steel fingers of the frost
And broken by the grinding and the strains
Of unknown stresses till I am all but lost
Among the countless sands of time, I still can
pray
That in the pounding storms and the shrill skirls
Which keep me low and broken and so gray
I shall be marked at least by graceful whorls.

THE ARAPAHOES

I lift my eyes to the Arapahoes,
Where like some frozen wave on frozen shore,
The glacier lies forever wrapped in snows.

Ages ago there bulked huge, grinding floes
Scooping the granite out in ancient score—
I lift my eyes to the Arapahoes

And for awhile forget my little woes;
Oh, why should I be fretted any more?
The glacier lies forever wrapped in snows.

Too swiftly fades the gleam and fades the rose,
Silent dies out life's flickering furore. . . .
I lift my eyes to the Arapahoes.

Long now are gone those tribal Indian foes
Who read these ancient peaks with pagan lore . . .
The glacier lies forever wrapped in snows.

It will outlive man's toil and busy shows;
It will be there with no man to explore. . . .
I lift my eyes to the Arapahoes:
The glacier lies forever wrapped in snows.

FLAT IRONS IN WINTER

You ask how look the hills with summer gone—
The swinging range, the marching foothills, all
So blue in summer with the mountain haze,
So gold and blue and crimson in the fall—
You ask how look the Flat Irons to the west,
Upthrusts of granite like titanic irons
Set up against the sun, yet centering all
The beauty of these beautiful environs. . . .
When snow comes, all the scene is like one
etched
By some intrepid artist, lines of light;
Or what the summer gave in mass and hue
The winter gives in splendid sculptured white.

THE TETONS

Did famed Parnassus rise from out a lake?
Or Pisgah's peak hold the eternal snows?
And is the Jungfrau blue as sapphire stone
Or gold at dawn, at sunset golden rose?

These mighty mountains rising from the blue
Wide sweeping waters, rising to the blue
Of far-curved skies, superb in silence, proud,
Are clothed in grandeur and a shroud
Of mystery. My spirit walks unshod.
I now know why Olympus was the place
Where dwelt the sacred rulers of the race,
Why on the mountain Moses talked with God.

HELL'S HALF-ACRE

Blue hills behind and sagebrush all around,
This sudden deep depression seems the haunt
Of eerie figures emaciate and gaunt;
The strange erosions mystify, astound,
In the convincing massing, mound on mound,
The forms of figures fleeing, fearful, trialed
Beyond endurance, driven, shrinking, wild;
And all this tortured haste without a sound.
Yet the imagination hears the cries,
Some shrill, some hoarse, unutterable woe
Caught only from lost souls that agonize
Beyond the brink of Purgatorio—
Felt in old woodcuts made of Noah's flood,
Conceived to blanch the cheek and chill the
blood.

EARLY COLORADO

Once they came, a motley throng,
Rude and rough adventurers—
Pick and shovel, grub and gin;
Sullen—silent—Irish grin—
Cursing, singing; weak and strong,
Crude and tough adventurers.
Gold and silver they would seek—
Gold at Ward and Cripple Creek;
Shafts to sink and logs to hew
For silver mines at Caribou;

Ore to dig at old Leadville,
Lodes to follow at Gold Hill;
Dumps to guard and claims to stake,
Camps to build and homes to make—
Once they came a dauntless throng,
Gallant, gruff adventurers.

DESERTED MINING TOWN

The grey and yellow hills are honeycombed
Like gopher holes dug by colossal paws.
The old shafts scar the countless mountain tops
And cut the sides of sparsely wooded draws.

Down deep within the valley stands the town—
Black Hawk and Central City—once the boast,
Metropolis and hub of all the states
Between Chicago and the Western Coast.

The Silver Dollar Tavern, large saloons,
The Opera house of costly wood and stone,
The churches on the hills, hotels and homes—
Remain, like nests from which the birds have flown.

Empty, deserted, staring silently,
Once prosperous, now stands the ghostly town:
No record telling of the flight, or why—
The dumps are mute, like sphinxes looking down.

THE CABIN IN THE HILLS

Beneath the shadows of high towering cliffs,
A few in clouds like some sea-going sail;
Or at the dizzy edge of deep abyss,
All day I mounted the half-hidden trail.

Kinnikinnick began to skirt the way
Grown thick with aspens or with yellow pine,
While close beside some ancient mine-shaft scar
The Indian paint-brush left a crimson line.

The lonely way beat in upon my soul:
Man seemed so far remote, so isolate—
What mattered to these granite walls and crests
The human heart of man, his love and hate?

Autumn had run across the timbered slopes,
To touch the aspen trees to fluttering gold;
And now as dropped the sun beyond the range
I sensed a sudden penetrating cold.

Still upward flung the trail, but in my mood
A subtle dread laid nameless hold of me;
Blue spruce and aspen pressing close about,
The darkness gathered in swift mystery.

And then, in sudden opening to the west,
A cup-shaped valley all the foreground fills,
And one long golden shaft of setting sun
Illumines there a cabin of the hills.

Amazed I stood; an unexpected boon
For one a stranger on an unknown trail,
And passing beautiful from my high point,
The scene below—like some romantic tale.

Some tale . . . but here I started from my dreams
And slung once more my pack for the descent.
There is a mountain creed that cabin doors
Are open doors whenever day is spent.

My halloo fell unheard in that great space,
The gloom unbroken till I struck a light—
And making sure of wood and water, then
I closed the cabin door upon the night.

I felt at once a secret something there:
The little room was tragic in its trim
But gave no sign of when or whom it housed,
A silence seemed capriciously its whim.

A clean sweet pipe before the open fire
Laid on the crude and rock-built chimney place,
I had an hour of peace and saddened dreams—
And in the smoke a woman's lovely face.

Strange how sorrow ever hounds a man,
How into this or that with subtle power,
No matter where his careless way may lead,
Still tragedy invades some silent hour.

The fire licked out in sudden ashen gust
As down the pass the wind began to sweep,
And weariness from the sheer mountain trail
Made grateful now the very thought of sleep.

But even as I moved to set to rights
The meager objects of the little room,
With heavy, helpless groping at the door
A man plunged headlong from without the gloom.

He staggered to the rudely fashioned bunk,
So careful clean, it seemed his unkemp self
A sacrilege; and now like one insane
Ran trembling fingers up and down the shelf.

"Hell! Where is it now? . . . I tell you it's a lie,
A damned black lie, a scoundrel, swindling lie!
That mine is rich. Ha! You think I do not know?
But where . . . ?" The harsh voice tapered to a cry.

Toil-hardened hands ran up and down the shelf
Among pathetic objects overhead—
A withered sumac branch, a broken jar,
A small queer-shapen box above the bed.

I felt myself caught up by a strange fate—
A long-belated scientist away
From members of my group, to find me here
In touch with some great need that bade me stay.

The uncouth man grew more and more intense,
Raved incoherently of gold and strife,
Unscrupled crooks who assayed lie for lie—
Himself, he'd show them if it took his life.

For long I sat unnoticed, but at last
I felt I might in part allay the storm
If I should talk or read, and so persuade
Some semblance of relief to that great form.

I told strange tales, I who had never told,
Recounted magic lore and battles old,
Spun out new yarns, and even sang a song—
But still the fellow raved about his gold.

"I tell you it's a lie. I'll not go back.
You know as well as I the mine will pay. . . .
Great eastern woods, the cool, cool shimmering
lake . . .
I swear she's not homesick . . . she wants to
stay. . . ."

At times a quiet ran into his pain
As seemed my words to penetrate his sense,
Then clutching wildly at some plot or verse,
I labored for this precious recompense.

Weariness tugged at my aching brain,
My body swayed to sleep all unaware.
To keep my voice still droning, droning on
I reached out for some papers lying there—

Some cast-off wrapping papers written close;
I read at first mechanically the lines;
My voice held on, the tossed form slight relaxed,
While fiercely swept the wind among the pines.

'He will not leave.' I read the half-blurred
words.
'He grows each day more morbidly severe;
Some days he scarcely speaks, so taciturn and
dark.
I cannot even write you what I fear. . . .

'There was a time I loved these colored hills,
Found in them strength, and aspiration fine,
Felt surge of soul, sang songs about my hills,
Thrilled to the freedom that I thought was mine.

'Day after day, in self-imposed deceit
I matched the dream of what there might have
been
With pretty baubles of the dreams to be—
Thank God! I kept it all away from him. . . .'

A stir as slight as that before the dawn
Spoke of the troubled soul almost in peace;
But yet I read the scattered tragic words,
Finding, perhaps, vicarious release.

'In all these lonely, isolated days,
Futile and robbed of every human joy,
Helpless I wait, while we stay madly on,
Lured by the dream that will at last destroy.

'Our everything is gone, our souls submerged,
Cudgeling the rocks to yield a treasured vein,
Digging new mines, sinking another shaft:
To gain a bit of gold we premium pain. . . .'

The words were often blurred, some pages lost,
But no line spoke recrimination or reproach,
Yet as I read the words before me there
I saw swift, helpless suffering encroach.

I saw a woman lonely in the wilds—
A woman with great mountains all around,
Whose heart went home, with twilight on the
elms,
And lilac lanes, and bluegrass covered ground;

A woman in whose eyes there grew and grew
A luminous dream of shimmering-surfaced lake,
Of tall-stemmed violets by a river bank—
And sleeping there a dream she would not wake.

I turned a page—a strangely ordered page,
'I write because—because I cannot pray . . .
I cannot think, and yet I must be calm.
I am alone. Robert has gone away.'

I turned a page. 'Today a tragic thing
Has come to us, and Robert has been hurt;
A falling beam, a heavy blow, and then—
The doctor gives some hope, but he is curt:

' "Over-exertion may be fatal yet." '
Were these, her words, to be a broken clue
Of this strange haggard wreck upon the bed?
I sought the next more closely than I knew.

'Alone . . . I am alone . . . Robert is gone,
Driven by his old obsession, gold—
Gone to the old deserted mine; he toils
Like one insane . . . his old obsession, gold. . . .

The doctor had but gone he grasped the box
He kept his bits of ore in on the shelf.
He raved about a swindle and a lie
That ruined all his dreams and all himself—

' "That's why I brought you here long years ago,
Ten years ago. Since then each hour, each
breath
I've used to give you wealth and take you back—
I have tried to give you gold, Elizabeth. . . ." '

The words were gone. And I like one made
blind
Groped for familiar sign, some sane, sure guide:
Robert—Elizabeth—ten tragic years. . . .
But where was she? I felt my senses slide. . . .

I must have slept awhile, but soon a cry
Brought me awake. In superhuman might
He started up, contorted features dark
In tragic pain; next moment ghastly white.

"The mine is rich; her veins are full of gold,
A scoundred, swindling lie—all cursed lies. . . ."
And in the horror of that awful hour
I had to know how hard a strong man dies. . . .

I waited long. Sky flashed to brilliant stars,
Stars wheeled to dawn, in bitter, bitter cold.
My weary mind once more broke leash and bond,
And memory made me once more very old.

Ten years ago—no, yearless years ago,
With twilight on the elms and lilac lane,
Elizabeth and Robert went away—
While I stayed on to make a friend of pain.

A silent prayer rose to the God of Trails . . .
Perhaps in time I could do something more—
I turned to see against the growing dawn
Elizabeth outside the cabin door.

THE TRAIL-MAKER

Where streams had cut the hills he disappeared.
From roadways marked he plunged into the strange
Untravelled canyons—sure of foot and quick
To note a natural roadway near the stream
Or on a shelving ledge near precipice
That fell to dizzy depths, past granite blocks,
Up through the towering timber, up and up.
The canyon closed him in, the walls rose high,
The mountain river dashed close at his feet—
His walls like prison, with a scrap of sky;
He passed undaunted, stranger to defeat.

And opening out, the canyon came at last
To fertile upland meadows, sweeping parks,
Where in his fancy he saw cattle graze
By teeming thousands; on again he went,
Striding against the sunset toward the range
In purple silence and eternal snow.
Some lonely peak would give him vantage point
To see again the vast prairie land.
What dreams he dreamed, what vision led
him on
We may not know—adventure, beauty, gold. . . .
The dim high trails are passing, some are gone;
But new frontiers grew from those trails of old.

THE RANGER

His eyes were always lifted to the peaks
As though he sought a trail no foot had made;
His gaze was far, the gaze of one who seeks
The wide blue distances where shorelines fade.
He dreamed of lonely shacks set by a lake,
Grown round by spruce; of campfires near a
stream;
Of high-walled canyons where quick thunders
wake;
Of sweeping ranges where the snowbeds gleam.
A dawn might find him at a glacier's crown
—The most austere of all the things of earth—
Or on some granite buttress looking down:
Something in him did not love a hearth.

MOUNTAIN RHYTHMS

There is a lilt in low blue hills,
A rich legato lies where turquoise range
Curves slowly off to end in grace-note trills.
And syncopations strange
Mark peaks whose swift crescendo
Fades to soft diminuendo
Of upland meadows
Lush with melted snows.
Staccato notes are those of saw-tooth stone.
Majestic holds are mountains all alone
Where swelling chords may mount from slow
Andante to *appassionato.*

O Poet or Musician who has moved
The rhythms of my life to move with these,
Write *Allegretto* over phrase and bars
And *Tranquillo* when gayer movements cease.
For I would know a cadenced solace still—
Would know beyond the rhythms I have loved,
Beyond the mountains and the low blue hill
The larger rhythms of the golden stars.

DOORS OF DAWN

Only in rare high moments is the soul courage-
ous
To stand before the doors of dawn and see
The incommunicable.
But in that luminous
Moment man has heard the symphony of silence.
And he has been the guest of majesty.

THE LANGUAGE OF SILENCE

Silence is a strange tongue
Mastered by a few;
Silence is a strange tongue
From ages gone;
Spoken only nobly,
Inflections true,
Spoken only nobly
Out of wisdom won;
Golden connotations
Caught from ages far,
Silence is a strange tongue
Shining as a star.

GREATER GIFT

My friend has given to me a gift—
Shaped in the workshop of a master,
Guarded long in a treasure-house impregnable,
Brought through flowery meadows,
Beside living waters,
Through the infinite stillness of the forest,
The eternal calm of the mountains,
Reflecting far horizons and clear-cut stars—
My friend has brought to me a rare, rare gift:
His thought of life wrought out in beauty
And dignity of language.
And I shall make of them a shrine
In the sacred place of my memory.

THIS CHRISTMAS

Bring me no wreaths or formal holly
This Christmas.
Let me have great boughs of pine,
Branches of cedar, spruce and juniper
With cones and berries.
This year let no electric baubles shine—
Not green and crimson.
But a mystic blue
Shot through with silver.
These colors mine
This holy season.
Out where the cattle are
I saw a star.

MARIA BEATA

Mary, Mother of Jesus, give ear.
Holy Mother, hear, oh hear,
Hear our prayer,
Thou Mary fair,
Magnificata,
Maria Beata—
Mary, hear!
Little Lord Jesus, thy Child, thy Child,
Jesus the mild,
Lay on thy bosom and smiled—
Smile now on us,
Holy Mother,
Mother of Jesus,
Magnificata,
Maria Beata,
Mary, Mother of Jesus, give ear,
Holy Mother, hear, oh hear!

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISSI

St. Francis was a good man
And wiser than the most.
He loved God's little creatures
And loved the Holy Ghost.

His little brothers were the birds
And little beasts of fur.
He walked where quiet waters were
And spoke the good Lord's words.

His kinsmen were the wind and wave,
The fruit and flowers, and fire.
He helped the poor and penance gave;
He served God's vineyard without hire.

He taught men to be dutiful.
His spirit was full free.
His canticles were beautiful
And blessed Holy Marie.

St. Francis was a good man
And wiser than the most.
He loved God's little creatures
And loved the Holy Ghost.

EXPERIENCE

I have known
The rush of sweet spring showers
Upon the throbbing ache of grief-sore thought.
And I have known the peace of quiet hours
That soothe the human soul sad overwrought.

I have felt the fierce wild wind from off the
mesa,
The hot and arid breath from barren plain,
The vibrant air from heaven-piercing moun-
tain . . .
And I have felt the stab of sudden pain.
I have caught the fragrance of the rain on roses,
The sun upon red clover hay at noon,
Of lilies tall and phantom-like at twilight,
The sweetness of the dew on locust bloom.
I have known the thrill that comes from spiced
adventure,
The tingle of the trail through autumn wood,
And gazing rapt upon some silent grandeur,
The bigness and the awe of mountain mood.
I have watched the spectacle of dull horizon
Grow a thing of radiance sublime,
And out of sullen skies a glorious rainbow
Trace tenuous hues against the vault of time.

I have heard the white-throat and the brown
thrush singing,
Have heard the elements in furied crash,
I have seen the marvel of the cloud of thunder,
Of heavens opening in a lightning flash.
The sea has beaten in upon my senses—
The ocean reaches long from chaos brought—
The pounding surf, the sea-side power of vista
Infinitely has its potence wrought.
Music of voice and song of some great organ
With power have fallen on my eager ears.

And one blue night I heard the white stars
singing—
Silent, I heard the symphony of spheres.
There have been hours a-light with gleaming
gladness,
There has been grief that seemed too great to
bear,
There has been wonder in the range of beauty,
There have been holy moments purged with
prayer.
But from the joy and pain and cosmic sweep of
grandeur,
From out the life by which the spirit grew,
From out the throbbing sense of swift adventure
My soul cries out for what it never knew.

INVIOLATE

Nothing can take away from me my dreams.
True, I have seen how storms the lilies fling,
Have seen the dust upon a moth's crushed wing,
Have seen a rainbow swept by sudden cloud;
I know the hardness of the passing crowd.
Yet I have known life's loveliness and gleams—
Nothing can take away from me my dreams.

Nothing can take away from me my faith.
Oh, many times I have in poignant pain
Cried out to see an idol fall again;

Have known the grief when on some sacred day,
Eyes, bent to worship, saw the gold turn clay.
I know too well how ravage moth and rust;
But broken idols shall not vanquish trust —
Nothing can take away from me my faith.

Nothing can take away from me my love.
I may not walk as proudly as I would
Had I in humbleness not understood
How even love can fail to see and know
The fine, high, truthful things that our years show;
Too often love is petulant and blind.
Yet love is brave and glorious and kind:
Nothing can take away from me my love.

AFTER STORMS WE BUILD AGAIN

Trees whose branches reach too far
For their root-spread
Give way at last to the wind's power
And soon are dead.

Houses builded not too strong
May fall
And grief may hold the bravest song
In thrall.

Wreckage is an ugly thing
  And broken trees
As sad as a skylark's broken wing
  A young lad sees. . . .

After storms a dull dismay
  And then,
Clearing the wreckage slow away,
  We build again.

NIGHT SKIES

A child, I saw the sky a canopy
Of velvet with some yellow stars arranged
In careless way, night after night unchanged;
Then fairy land with firefly pageantry . . .
Science revealed the splendid panoply
Of burnished planets in wide space outflung,
Systems innumerable in vastness hung,
Of flaming worlds in dark immensity.

Then wiser grown, I found that nameless blue
Fretted with golden fire; the firmament
Immeasurable where whirling worlds may sing
And argent lights of rose or white shine through
The unutterable beauty God has spent
To make man know himself a deathless thing.

INFLUENCE

There may not be a balm in meadow or in field,
I only know
That when my restless days are dark, these seem
to yield
A healing glow.

There may not be a strength in forest and in hills
Or peace in flowers —
But my impetuous heart has fully known
Their subtle powers.

Bethesda's little pool may still send virtue forth
And even yet
We may gain struggle for Gethsemane
On Olivet.

FORTITUDE

When Life's hostile forces move against my soul
Invulnerably arrayed,
I would gather the mantle of the mountain
about me
And be unafraid.

When my spirit walks in strange and alien ways
Where sorrows are,
I would lift my eyes undaunted
To a star.

ULTIMA THULE

When the last lone barrier is passed
And space and time no more,
Of all that life has painfully amassed,
Of nameless beauty or of hope or lore—
What then will comfort most?

When come to end the inexorable years,
And the last lesson learned
From the blurred pages of human joys and fears—
When mortal face is turned
Toward that other coast,

O serene evangel of the spirit, then
Give me to know a faith worthy of men!

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